

Sutherland Reservoir

2010 Fall Survey Summary



Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

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Sutherland Reservoir is the first canal reservoir downstream from Lake McConaughy. This reservoir is utilized for cooling of Nebraska Public Power District's Gerald Gentleman Station. Thus, water temperatures are warmer earlier in the spring and later into the fall than at other similar reservoirs. Sutherland offers some unique fishing spots including the canal inlet, canal outlet, cooling pond outlet and cooling pond inlet (i.e. the bubble).

Fish populations are sampled each fall Sutherland Reservoir using gill nets, a method commonly used to sample fish found primarily in open water, such as walleye, white bass, channel catfish and hybrid striped bass. Gill nets are set on approximately the same dates and locations each year to reduce variability and allow for trend comparisons of species abundance and size distributions. Environmental factors can play a role in catch rate and composition. This may have been the case in our 2010 sampling as water levels were lower and water temperature was warmer on the sampling date than usual.

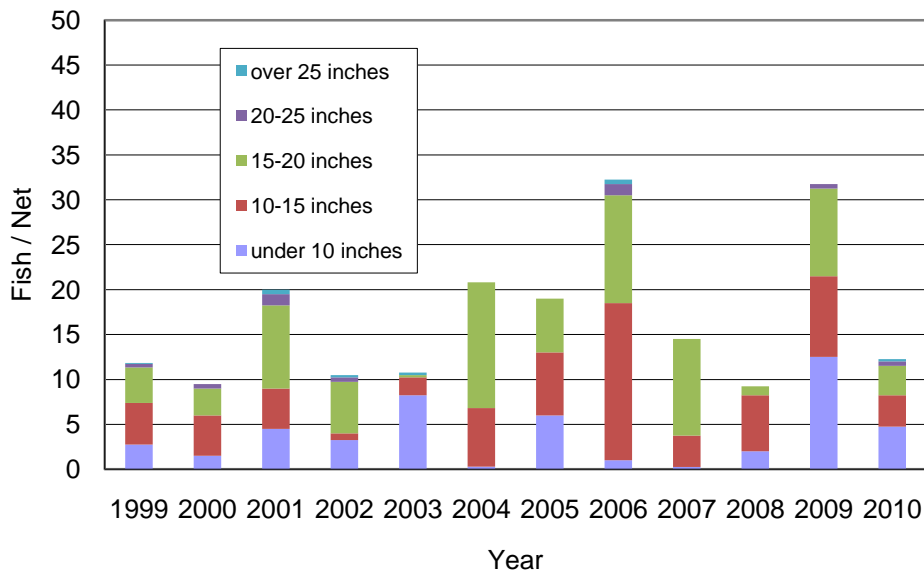
Take notice of fishing regulation changes at Sutherland. The channel catfish daily bag limit as of January 1, 2011 is five and the possession limit is ten. Access the 2011-2012 fishing guide at <http://outdoornebraska.ne.gov/Fishing/guides/fishguide/pdf/FishGuide.pdf> or pick up a print copy at your local vendor or NGPC office.

White bass and walleye should provide desirable angling opportunities again in 2011 although they were sampled in lower numbers than in 2009. Sutherland Reservoir has provided an early walleye bite for the last several years. Many anglers target white bass during the summer and into fall when they are schooling and can be easily located and caught on the surface. In 2010, channel catfish were sampled in higher numbers than in many previous years. Channel catfish anglers have great success using night crawlers, shad, livers, blood baits, and commercially prepared baits. There were zero hybrid striped bass sampled in 2010 indicating that hybrid striped bass fishing could be slow.

The following text and graphs are the result of netting surveys completed during the fall of 2009 at Sutherland Reservoir. For comparative purposes it also shows results from previous years.

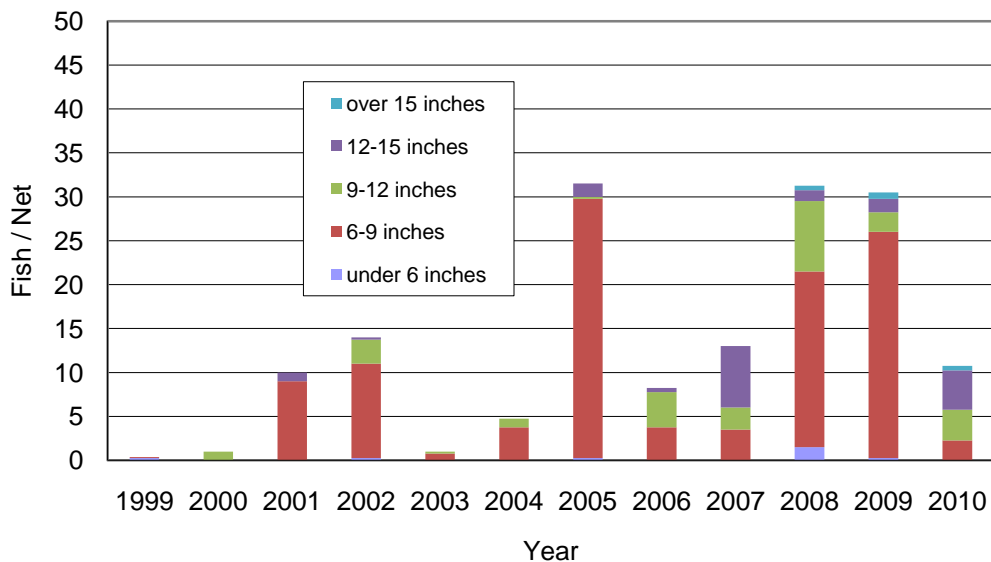
Standard Population Survey Results

Walleye per Gill Net by Length Group



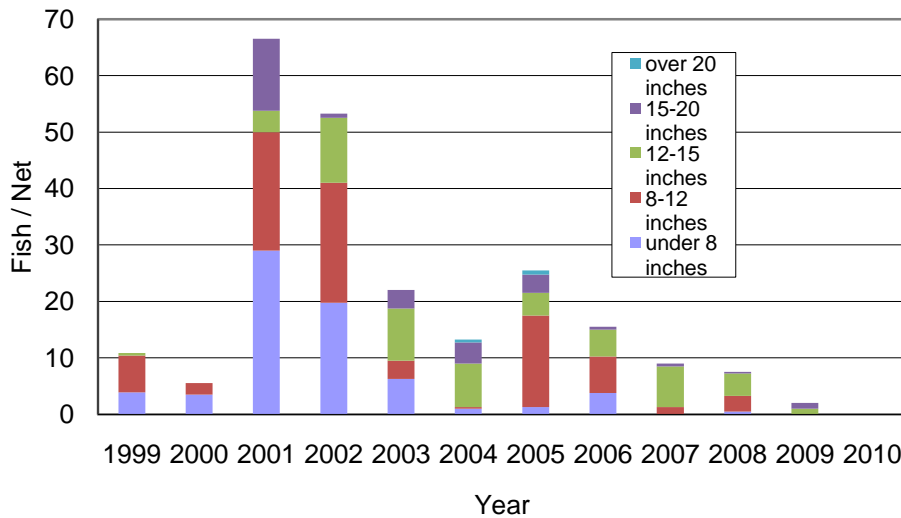
Walleye catch rates have been inconsistent since 2004. Compared to 2009, walleye catch was down but length distribution of walleye sampled was desirable with a mean length of 12.4" and individuals over 20". Walleye are stocked annually into Sutherland and 75,000 fingerlings are requested to be stocked in 2011.

White Bass per Gill Net by Length Group



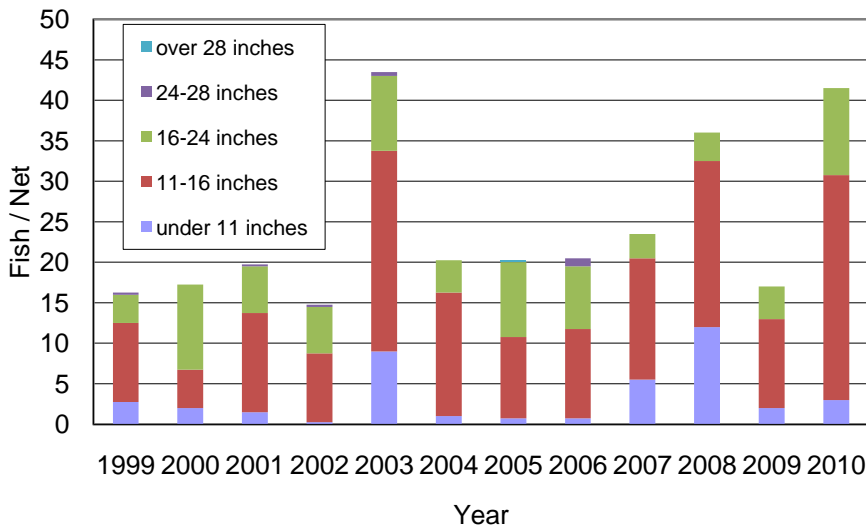
White bass catch rate was lower than the previous two years with 11 per gill net sampled but length distribution was improved with a mean length of sampled fish being 11.1". Despite the low catch rate observed in 2010, many of the 6-9" individuals observed in the 2009 sample may be available to catch in 2011. White bass are not stocked into Sutherland Reservoir.

Hybrid Striped Bass per Gill Net by Length Group



Zero hybrid striped bass were sampled in 2010. This continued a declining trend of gill net catch rates observed over the last six years. A low density population consisting of large individuals (> 20") is desired. Hybrid striped bass are stocked into Sutherland and 30,000 fingerlings are requested to be stocked in 2011.

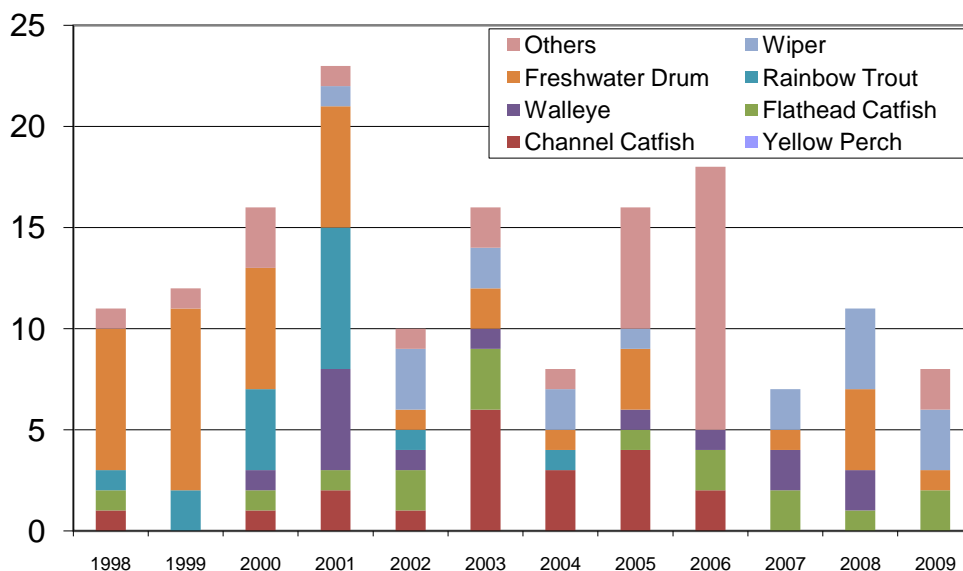
Channel Catfish per Gill Net by Length Group



Channel catfish were sampled in large numbers in 2010 with approximately 42 sampled per gill net. This was the largest sampled observed since 2003. Average length of those sampled was 14.7". Channel catfish are not stocked into Sutherland Reservoir.

Master Angler Awards, Sutherland Reservoir 1999-2009 (2010 data not yet available)

* Only wipers larger than 24" or 8# were included

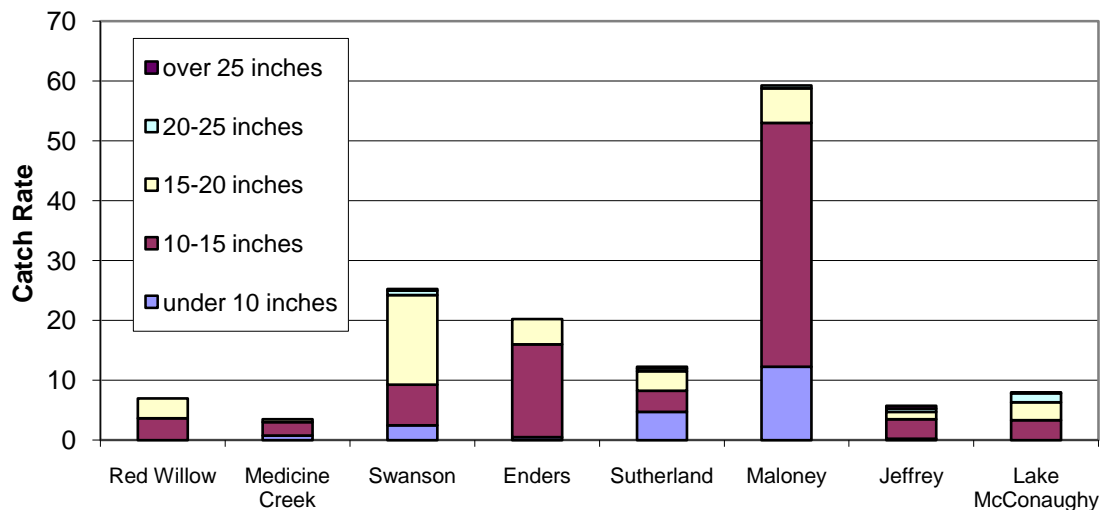


There was a total of 8 Master Angler fish reported in 2009. Although all fish that qualify for MA status are not reported, MA awards are useful in tracking the number of trophy size fish over time. There were 3 hybrid striped bass, 2 flathead catfish, 1 smallmouth bass, 1 freshwater drum and 1 sucker reported in 2009.

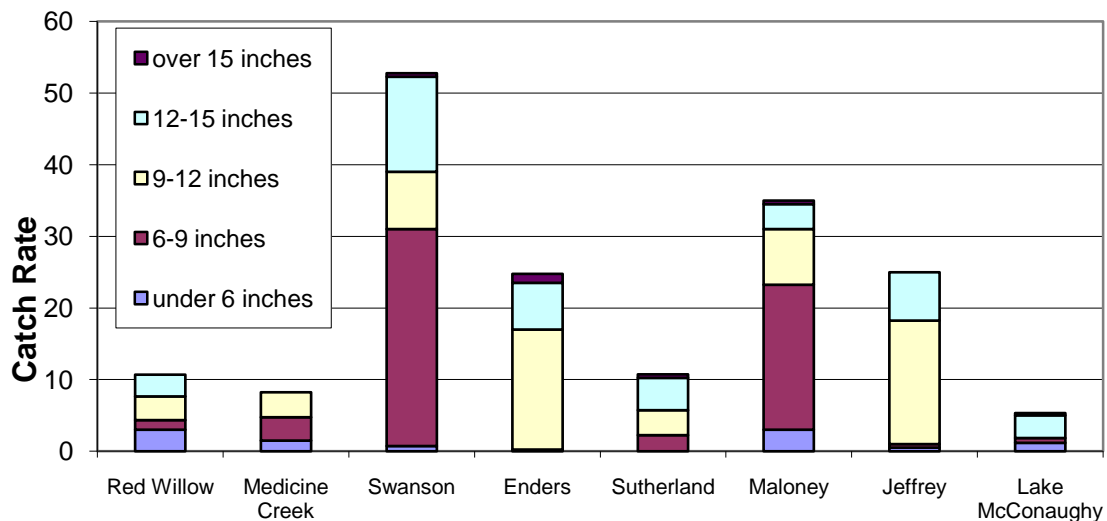
Southwest District Reservoir Standard Survey

Comparisons from 2010 Gill Net Data

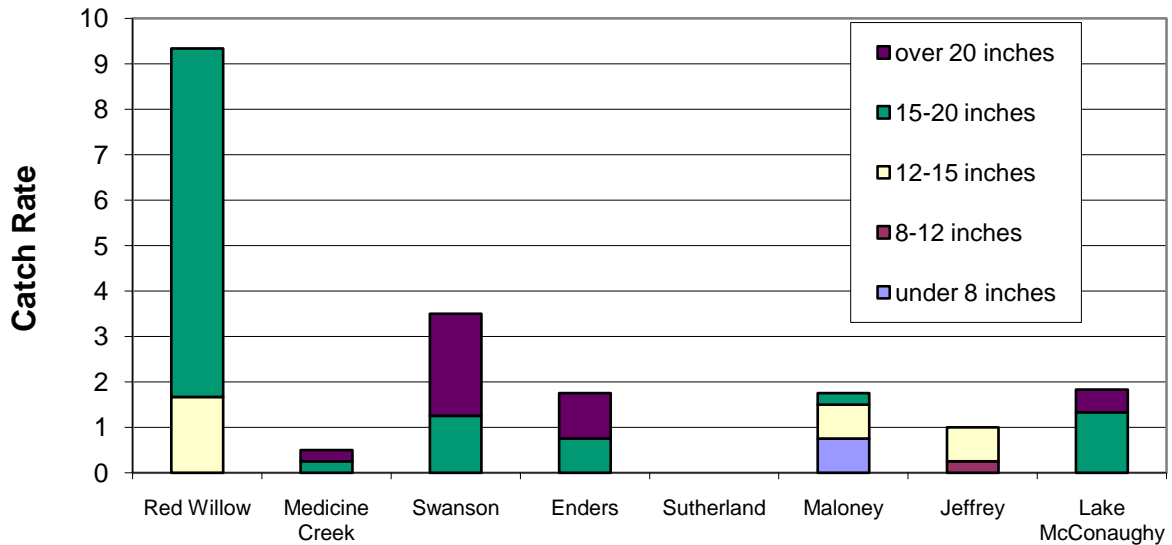
Walleye



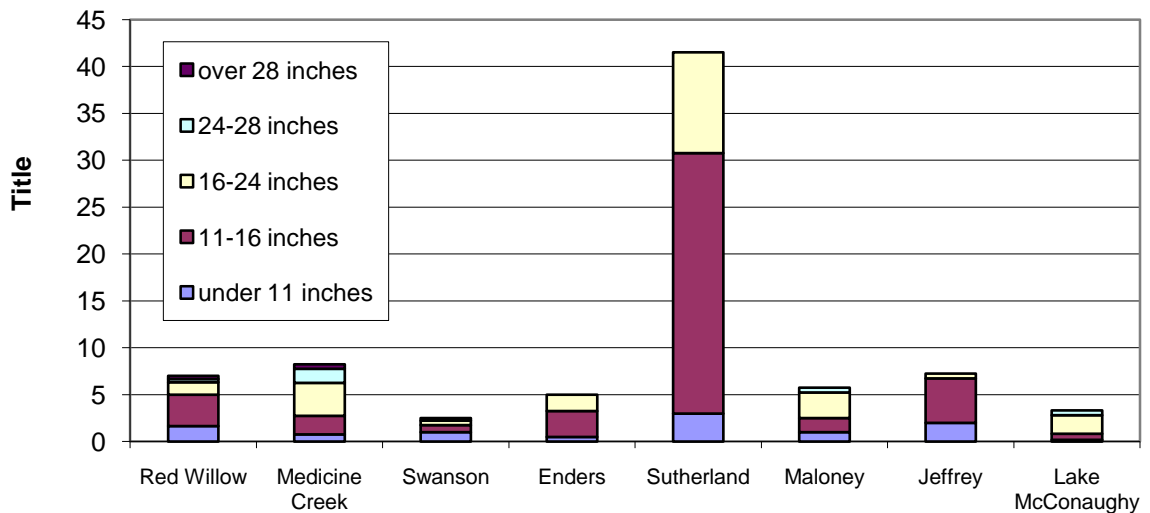
White Bass



Hybrid Striped Bass



Channel catfish



For additional information on fisheries management at Sutherland Reservoir contact:
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